

## Congresswoman Matsui Puts Forward Legislation to Reduce Diesel Emissions

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Reauthorization of DERA Program Will Aid Environment, Economy and Public Health

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) introduced H.R. 6482, the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Act reauthorization, which would continue to fund the modernization of diesel engines through retrofits for an additional five years. It would strengthen ongoing efforts to reduce pollution from diesel engines — including those on school buses that transport our children — which will protect public health and create additional demand for clean diesel technology.

In 2005, Congress enacted the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, which established a five-year voluntary national and state-level grant and loan program to reduce diesel emissions protect public health and help states meet air quality standards of the Clean Air Act. This legislation was introduced in coordination with Representative Laura Richardson (D-CA) and is a companion to the S. 3973, authored by Senators George Voinovich (R-OH) and Tom Carper (D-DE).

“Diesel emissions are one of the most significant health risks to Americans,” said Representative Matsui. “The reauthorization of DERA will promote sound environmental and economic policy by helping states and localities meet air quality standards. By utilizing federal funding, this program leverages state and private resources to invest in diesel retrofit technology to help our communities comply with the Clean Air Act.”

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has linked diesel emissions to premature death, aggravation of symptoms associated with asthma, and numerous other health impacts every year. The agency estimates there are 11 million diesel engines in America lacking the latest pollution control technology. Retrofitting diesel engines provides enormous environmental benefits, yet there are few direct economic incentives for vehicle and equipment owners to do so. The financial incentives provided by DERA support voluntary rather than regulatory efforts to assist states meet current air quality standards.

The EPA has also estimated that if the DERA program were fully funded, it would reduce particulate matter emissions by 70,000 tons, generate nearly \$20 billion in economic benefit, and return \$13 of benefit for every one dollar invested. Particularly in this time of tight budgets, the state and local entities charged with enforcing Clean Air Act requirements need effective federal assistance to clean the air our constituents breathe. Reauthorization of DERA would build on the successes of this targeted and cost- effective initiative.

In March, Congresswoman Matsui spearheaded a letter to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies supporting \$100 million in funding for the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) and an \$82.5 million increase over funding levels from the previous year for state and local air quality grants. These requests had been endorsed by a broad and unique group of more than 350 public health, environmental, and industry supporters, including the Union of Concerned Scientists, the American Lung Association, Caterpillar and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

“My district, California’s 37th, is home to some of the nation’s largest ports and has some of the busiest freeways and railways in the nation. While this infrastructure provides thousands of jobs to our constituents, it is also partly responsible for well above normal asthma and cancer rates and very poor air quality,” Congresswoman Richardson said. “The Diesel Emissions Reduction Act not only provides economic incentives to decrease emissions and protect our environment, it also creates substantial health and economic benefits. It is critical that we not only extend the program over the next five years, but also improve and expand the program so it can work even better in protecting the health of those who live near our ports. I look forward to working with my colleagues to try to pass this legislation before the end of the year and improve the air quality for citizens across the nation.”

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